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Programme budget implications of draft resolution B, entitled "United Nations public information policies and activities"

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

A. Request contained in the draft resolution

1. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 21 and 22 of draft resolution B, entitled "United Nations public information policies and activities", contained in document A/AC.198/1993/L.2, the General Assembly would:

A. Call upon the Secretary-General, in respect of United Nations public information policies and activities, to implement the following recommendations, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, and in this regard to ensure that the Department of Public Information:

(a) Continues to disseminate information about the activities of the United Nations in coordination with the information services of other relevant agencies in accordance with the United Nations medium-term plan, the programme budget and their relevant revisions, pertaining, inter alia to:

(i) International peace and security;

(ii) Disarmament;

(iii) Peace-keeping operations and peace-making;

(iv) Decolonization and the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the light of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism;

(v) The promotion and protection of human rights and in that context the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights;

(vi) The elimination of all forms of racial discrimination;

(vii) The advancement of the status of women and their role in society;

(viii) The promotion of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

(ix) Problems of economic and social development, as well as international economic cooperation aimed at resolving external debt problems;

(x) The least developed countries;

(xi) The environment and development;

(xii) The elimination of foreign occupation;

(xiii) The campaign against terrorism in all its forms in line with General Assembly resolution 40/61 of 9 December 1985;

(xiv) International efforts against drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking;

(xv) Crime prevention and criminal justice;

(xvi) Support for the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and for the tremendous efforts of the African countries aimed at recovery and development, as well as the positive response by the international community to alleviate the serious economic situation prevailing in Africa;

(xvii) International efforts towards the total eradication of apartheid and support for the establishment of a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa and, where necessary, the role of the United Nations in this context;

(xviii) United Nations activities pertaining to the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine, in particular, also including current developments in that region and the ongoing peace process;

(b) Provides the necessary level of information support for the activities of the United Nations in situations requiring immediate and special response;

(c) Continues its efforts at promoting an informed understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations system among the peoples of the world and at strengthening the positive image of the system as a whole;

(d) Continues its briefings, assistance and orientation programmes for broadcasters, journalists and other media professionals from developing countries focused on United Nations-related issues;

(e) Provides, on the basis of its activities, information to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) about new forms of cooperation at the regional and subregional levels, for the training of media professionals and the improvement of the information and communication infrastructures of developing countries;

(f) Continues its policies of cooperation with all agencies of the United Nations system, and in particular with UNESCO;

(g) Continues its policies of cooperation with the news agencies in and of the developing countries, in particular the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries;

B. Urge all efforts to ensure timely production and dissemination of the Department of Public Information's major publications, in particular the UN Chronicle, the Yearbook of the United Nations and Africa Recovery, maintaining consistent editorial independence and accuracy, taking necessary measures to ensure that its output contains adequate, objective and equitable information about issues before the Organization, reflecting divergent opinions wherever they occur;

C. Encourage the Secretary-General to explore ways and means to revive the Development Forum, which has continued to receive a mandate of the General Assembly, and report thereon to the Committee on Information;

D. Request the management of the Department of Public Information to review the Department's publications and proposals for publication to ensure that all publications fulfil an identifiable need, that they do not duplicate other publications inside or outside the United Nations system, and that they are produced in a cost-effective manner, and report to the Committee on Information at its sixteenth session;

E. Request the Secretary-General to report to the sixteenth session of the Committee on Information, for the purpose of evaluating the need for any subsequent integration, the results of the current trial of integrating 18 United Nations information centres with field offices of the United Nations Development Programme as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report (A/AC.198/1993/7). The report should also contain the views of the host countries, bearing in mind the concerns of Member States that the integration of the United Nations information centres with the United Nations offices could adversely affect their functions in the developing countries;

F. Invite the Secretary-General to make such recommendations as he may judge necessary regarding the establishment and location of new United Nations information centres;

G. Request the Secretary-General to ensure that his proposals relating to the structure, functions and activities of the seven United Nations interim offices in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan fully comply with the mandates of the relevant General Assembly resolutions pertaining to operational activities and dissemination of information, taking into account the observations and recommendations of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/47/7/Add.16), decision 47/469 of 23 December 1992 taken by the General Assembly and relevant General Assembly resolutions, especially resolution 47/199 of 22 December 1992;

H. Call upon the Secretary-General to study ways and means to rationalize and effect equitable disbursement of available resources to all United Nations

information centres and report to the Committee on Information at its sixteenth substantive session;

I. Request the Secretary-General to continue to consult with the Polish authorities, with a view to finalizing arrangements for a United Nations information component in Warsaw;

J. Call upon the Secretary-General to implement fully and expeditiously the recommendation contained in paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 47/73 B of 14 December 1992 regarding

(a) The establishment of a United Nations information centre in Sana'a;

(b) The reactivation of the United Nations information centre in Tehran;

(c) The enhancement of the information centres in Bujumbura, Dar es Salaam and Dhaka;

and to submit a report on the implementation of the aforementioned recommendation to the sixteenth session of the Committee on Information;

K. Call upon the Secretary-General to enhance the efficiency of regional radio units in the Department of Public Information;

L. Call upon the Secretary-General to make every effort to create conditions more conducive to achieving parity by appropriate utilization of existing equipment in the press coverage of meetings in English and French;

M. Request the Secretary-General to submit to the Committee on Information at its sixteenth session a report on observations and suggestions submitted by Member States on ways and means of furthering the development of communications infrastructures and capabilities in developing countries, with a view to consolidating recent experience in the field of international cooperation aimed at enabling them to develop their own information and communications capacities, freely and independently;

N. Support the decision of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development requesting the Secretary-General to launch on a priority basis, in cooperation with relevant specialized agencies, funds and programmes, a specific programme of public information on the World Summit for Social Development's core issues as well as on its objectives;

O. Support the decision of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo in 1994, requesting the Secretary-General to develop and launch, on a priority basis, in cooperation with competent United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, a coordinated public information programme on the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo in 1994.

B. Activities by which the request would be implemented

2. Should the draft resolution be adopted by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General would:

(a) Ensure that the Department of Public Information continues to disseminate information about the activities of the United Nations in coordination with the information services of other relevant agencies in accordance with the medium-term plan, the programme budget and their relevant revisions;

(b) Submit a report to the Committee on Information on his efforts to explore ways and means to revive Development Forum;

(c) Submit a report to the Committee on Information at its sixteenth session on the review of the Department's publications and proposals for publication;

(d) Submit a report to the Committee on Information at its sixteenth session on integration of United Nations information centres with other United Nations offices;

(e) Make such recommendations, as he may judge necessary, regarding the establishment and location of United Nations information centres;

(f) Submit a report to the Committee on Information at its sixteenth session on his study of ways and means to rationalize and effect equitable disbursement of available resources to all United Nations information centres;

(g) Continue consultations with the Polish authorities with the aim of finalizing arrangements for a United Nations information component in Warsaw;

(h) Submit a report to the Committee on Information at its sixteenth session on the full and expeditious implementation of paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 47/73 B;

(i) Continue implementation, on a phased basis, of provision in conference rooms at Headquarters of the necessary furniture and equipment with a view to achieving parity in the press coverage of meetings in English and French;

(j) Submit a report to the Committee on Information at its sixteenth session on observations and suggestions submitted by Member States on ways and means of furthering the development of communications infrastructures and capabilities in developing countries;

(k) Launch, on a priority basis, in cooperation with relevant specialized agencies, funds and programmes, a specific programme of public information on the World Summit for Social Development;

(l) Develop and launch, on a priority basis, in cooperation with competent United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, a coordinated public information programme on the International Conference on Population and Development.

C. Additional requirements at full cost

3. The requested activities listed in paragraphs 1.A and 1.J above reflect the approved programme of work under section 31 of the 1992-1993 programme budget, and no additional resources would be required for their implementation.

4. With regard to the requests contained in paragraphs 1.B and 1.K above, the Department of Public Information would continue its efforts to ensure timely production and editorial independence of its mandated publications, and to enhance the efficiency of its regional radio units. No additional appropriations would be required in this context.

5. As regards the request contained in paragraph 1.C above, the Department of Public Information will examine, together with any interested United Nations agencies and organizations in the context of JUNIC, any practical administrative and funding proposals that may permit the revival of Development Forum on an assured and continuing basis. The results of such review would be reported to the Committee on Information. No additional appropriation would be required for the production of this report.

6. It is not anticipated that any additional appropriations would be required for the production of the reports, studies and assessments called for or invited in paragraphs 1.D, 1.E, 1.F, and 1.H above, as they relate to the regular programme of activities of the Programme Evaluation and Communications Research Unit of the Department of Public Information.

7. With regard to the request contained in paragraph 1.L above, consistent with the information provided in paragraph 8 of the Secretary-General's statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/47/57 of 24 November 1992), phased installation of furniture and equipment in the conference rooms at Headquarters to ensure parity in the coverage of English and French from existing resources has commenced. As of late 1992, facilities for French coverage were installed in conference rooms 1 and 3. For 1993, the Department of Public Information is working with the Office of General Services on arrangements to install similar facilities in conference rooms 2, 4, and the ECOSOC and Trusteeship Council chambers. For the 1994-1995 biennium, the Department of Public Information and the Office of General Services anticipate the completion of installation of facilities for French coverage in all the remaining conference rooms.

8. The request contained in paragraph 1.I above, concerns the establishment of a United Nations information component in Warsaw. In this connection it is noted that the Polish Government has agreed in principle to provide rent-free premises as well as a financial contribution of 200 million Polish zlotys (equivalent to approximately US$ 12,700 at current rates) to partially offset initial operating resource requirements for the information component. However, discussions between representatives of the Polish Government and the Secretariat are continuing on a number of unresolved issues (including those referred to in paragraph 7 of the Secretary-General's note (A/AC.198/1993/9) on enhancing, reactivation and establishment of United Nations information centres). The Department of Public Information will continue to consult with the Polish authorities with a view to resolving all outstanding issues. At this stage, therefore, no additional appropriations would be required.

9. With regard to the request contained in paragraph 1.N above, the Department of Public Information is developing a specific programme of public information on the World Summit for Social Development, the resource requirements for which would be reflected in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995.

10. As regards the request contained in paragraph 1.O above, the United Nations Population Fund, in consultation with the Department of Public Information, has developed a public information programme on the International Conference on Population and Development. A related provision will be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995.

Summary

Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution B contained in document A/AC.198/1993/L.2, no additional appropriations would be required under the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.